Wichita Eagle

MECHANICAL FLIGHT.

There Is a Possibility That Men Will Fly Through the Air Before Long.

Above us is the great aerial ocean, stretching over all lands, and offering an always open way to them, yet a way that has never yet been thus trodden. Can it be that the power we have always lacked is at last found, and that it only remains to learn to guide it?

Let me, in answering, compare the case to that which would present itself if the actual ocean had never been traversed because it was always covered with fields of thin ice, which gave way under foot, which indeed permitted vessels to be launched and to float, but which compelled them to move wherever the ice drifted. Such vessels would resemble our balloons, and be of as little practical use; but now suppose we were told, "The ice which has always been your obstacle may be made your very means of transport, for you can glide over the thinnest ice, provided you only glide fast enough, and experiments will prove not only how fast you must go to make the ice bear, but that it is quite within the limits of your strength to go with the requisite speed."

All this might be true, and yet, if no one had ever learned to skate, every trial of this really excellent plan would probably end in disaster, as all past efforts to fly have done. Indeed, in our actual experience with the air, men have come to the same kind of wrong conclusion as would have been reached in supposing that the ice could not be traversed, because no one had the strength to skate, while the truth would be that man has plenty of strength to skate, but is not born with the skill.

The simile is defective so far as it suggests that man can sustain himself by his unaided strength on calm air, which I believe to be impracticable; but it is the object of experiments to prove that he has now the power to sustain himself with the aid of engines recently constructed as soon as he has the skill to direct them.

If asked whether a method of flight will soon be put in practice, I should have to repeat that what has preceded is matter of demonstration, but that this is matter of opinion. Expressing then, a personal opinion only, I should answer, "Yes." It is hardly possible that the secondary difficulties will not be soon conquered by the skill of our inventors and engineers, whose attention is already beginning to be drawn to the fact that here is a new field open to them, and though I have not experimented far enough to say that the relations of power to weight established for small machines will hold for indefinitely large ones, it is certain they do so hold, at any rate far enough to enable us to transport, at speeds which make us practically independent of the wind, weights much greater than that of a man.

Progress is rapid now, especially in invention, and it is possible—it seems to me even probable—that before the century closes we shall see this universal road of the all embracing air, which recognizes none of man's boundaries, traveled in every direction, with an effect on some of the conditions of our existence which will mark this among all the wonders the century has seen.—S. P. Langley in Century.

A Remarkable Deaf Mute.

One of the most remarkable inmates of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb is Richard Clinton, who, though deaf, dumb and blind, has in the fourteen years he has spent in the asylum acquired an education and a self supporting trade. He was born in Dublin with the senses of sight and hearing perfect. One eye was destroyed in childhood by an explosion, and an attack of scarlet fever cost him the other eye and his hearing.

He was for a time in a school for deaf mutes in Ireland, but it was not until he entered the New York institution that he derived benefit from the instruction given him. Here he has been taught the ordinary branches of education and has acquired the trade of bottoming chairs. He learned to write by using a rule to guide his hand. Of late he has learned to use the typewriter and has discarded the pen.

Clinton uses the sign language in conversation, and reads the replies of his companions by touching their hands. His touch is abnormally sensitive, as is often the case with the blind. By touching the hand of a friend he recognizes the person, and he recalls an old acquaintance from whom he has been long separated by feeling his face, hands and form.

The other boys in the institution treat Clinton in their play as roughly as if he had sight. He never resents such treatment. He is only angered when he is pitied. When he is pushed he recognizes the persons attacking him by the manner in which they touch him. Many tricks have been played upon him, but it rarely happens that he gets caught twice by the same trick.—New York World.

A Mean Bridegroom.

Dr. Howard, of Flatbush, L. I., was routed out at midnight to marry a couple and was compelled to arouse his family to act as witnesses. He was given a fat package by the bridegroom, upon the latter's departure. The good doctor spent half an hour or so unwinding paper after paper from that package only to find at last a silver quarter which had been used as a sleeve button. One face had been ground smooth and ornamented with a monogram.—New York World.

HE LIVES.

"Speak tenderly! For he is dead," we say;
"With gracious hand smooth all his roughened past,
And fullest measure of reward forecast,
Forgetting naught that gloried his brief day."
Yet when the brother who along our way—
Prone with his burdens, heart worn in the strife—
Falters before us, how we search his life,
Censure, and sternly punish while we may!

Oh, weary are the paths of earth, and hard!
And living hearts alone are ours to guard.
At least begrudge not to the sore distraught
The reverent silence of our pitying thought.
Life, too, is sacred; and he best forgives
Who says, "He errs, but" (tenderly) "he lives."
—Mary Mapes Dodge in Boston Woman's Journal.

THE MAIDEN'S LEAP.

The sun had sunk behind Ben Nevis' towering triple peak, and the mountain cast a deep shadow over the castle of Inverlochy and far out upon the placid blue waters of Lochiel.

A merry group of Highland lads and lasses were congregated upon the greensward before the castle's walls, threading with joyous steps the mazes of the dance, to the inspiring notes of the shrill bagpipe.

All was mirth and glee, when an untoward accident disturbed the harmony of the scene. A band of Highlanders descended the mountain pass, driving before them a herd of cattle. A bull, shaggy and untamed, broke from the herd, and with a ferocious bellow dashed toward the circle of dancers.

With shrill cries they broke up their sport and fled in all directions. The infuriated animal singled out one fair girl, probably attracted by her scarf, the prevailing color of which was red, and closely pursued her.

Though fear lent her wings, the mad beast gained upon her. He was close at her heels, his head leveled for the plunge, when a tall Highlander sprang before the flying girl, grasped the bull by the horns, and with a dexterous movement hurled the huge animal upon its back. Ere it could rise to its feet again, the drovers, who had been swarming to the rescue of the girl, bound it securely with cords. When goaded to its feet again, the bull moaned plaintively, and looked around bewildered and subdued by its rough tumble.

The villagers of Inverlochy thronged around the man who had performed this great feat of muscular strength, and the fair girl he had saved timidly thanked her deliverer. They all gazed curiously upon him, for it was now perceived that he did not wear the tartan of the Campbells, and was a stranger.

He was a boy in years, not over twenty, and yet fully developed, standing full six feet four inches in height, clad in Highland costume, which displayed his well proportioned form to great advantage, and wearing an eagle's feather in his bonnet, the symbol of a chief. His target, or shield, "round as the moon," covered with ox hide and studded with brass knobs, hung around his neck. The hilt of a huge two handed claymore peeped from under his left arm, and a long dirk rested in the sheath upon his right thigh. Clad in this picturesque garb, with long flowing locks of light brown hair, a ruddy complexion and a bright blue eye, he was a fine type of those ancient warriors of the Gael whom the bard Ossian has immortalized in song.

"What is thy name, pretty lassie?" he asked the girl, when she had thanked him for the good service and stolen a glance of admiration at the frank, open face and stalwart form of her preserver.

"I am called Annie of Lochiel," she answered, timidly, yet with a sweet smile that had a strange fascination for the young Highlander, who found it impossible to withdraw his gaze from that winning face.

"Are you a Cameron of the Clan Lochiel?" he asked, eagerly, and with interest.

"Not she!" broke in one of the men of Inverlochy, who wore the badge of an under chief. "She is a Campbell, and we call her Annie of Lochiel because she was born by yonder water. Her mother was a McLean; she died when Annie was an infant; Her father was Duncan Campbell, laird of Morven, and he was slain by the Gordons of Huntley in the raid of Garioch. There's her history in a nutshell. I that tell it to you am Malcolm MacPhie, captain of Inverlochy, and now, my braw gillie, who are you?"

The Highlander reared his tall form with haughty pride as he replied:

"I am Alaster MacDonald, son of Coll-of-the-left-hand, chieftain of Mingarry and Kintyre."

A buzz went around the circle at these words. The MacDonalds were a bold and warlike clan, and Coll-of-the-left-hand was not unknown to fame.

"I have heard of the chieftain of Kintyre," returned Malcolm MacPhie, "but why do they call him 'of the left hand?'"

"Faith! I know not," answered Alaster carelessly, "unless it be that he can wield his claymore as well with the left hand as with the right."

A murmur of admiration greeted this announcement. Strength of limb and skill in arms were considered great virtues in those warlike days.

"Come, Alaster," cried Malcolm, his heart won by the bold bearing of the young Highlander. "Thou has preserved our fairest maiden from a cruel death. Bide with me in Inverlochy for a few days and taste the hospitality of our ancient castle."

"There is no feud between our clans," returned Alaster, "and I accept your offer."

They entered the castle together.

Malcolm MacPhie had cause to rue the hospitality which had induced him to invite the young Highland chieftain to enter the walls of Castle Inverlochy. It soon became apparent to others besides himself that the bold Alaster had found favor in the eyes of pretty Annie of Lochiel. A strong affection seemed to have arisen at the first meeting of this young pair, an affection which their eyes were not slow to confess, and which was revealed in eloquent glances.

Malcolm had detected more than one of these glances as he dispensed the hospitality of the castle, and he resolved in his own mind that Alaster should not bide long at Inverlochy. He prevented all chances of conversation between them until it was time for Annie to retire for the night. He then invited Alaster to walk with him upon the battlements, and pointed out the strength of the castle.

A taper gleamed from a low turreted window that looked out upon the parapet.

"Who occupies yon chamber?" asked Alaster.

"Annie of Lochiel," replied Malcolm.

"A winsome lassie!" responded Alaster warmly. "I would I could persuade her to go with me into the land of Kintyre and become the mistress of Castle Mingarry. It would glad the heart of Coll-of-the-left-hand to welcome so fair a daughter."

"That can never be," returned Malcolm, quickly, with an angry flush; "Annie is the ward of Sir Donald Campbell of Auchinbreck, my chief and kinsman. Seek another bride, Alaster MacDonald, for Annie is to be my wife."

Alaster's eyes were fixed upon the little window as he listened to these words, and he saw a fair face appear there. An energetic shake of the head said very plainly, "No, no!" to Malcolm's assertion, and the fair vision disappeared.

"I wish you joy," replied Alaster, with a quiet smile, "happy will be the man who calls the lovely Annie his."

A white hand was waved for a moment from the casement, and quickly withdrawn. Alaster was understood and answered. Malcolm was totally unconscious of this novel courtship.

"A rare place this for an escalade," said Alaster, leaning over the parapet and pointing to a spur of Ben Nevis that reared its craggy head almost on a level with the battlements.

"For a goat, yes," answered Malcolm disdainfully. "No human being could scale yon cliff. Look at the distance; it is twelve feet from the battlement, with a yawning abyss between. An enemy will never enter Inverlochy from that quarter."

"A lover might scale yonder cliff to speak with his sweetheart," returned Alaster carelessly, "and he would think lightly of the danger for the boon of one sweet smile."

"And break his neck for his pains," answered Malcolm with a laugh. "Come, the night is nearly spent, and you are welcome to a share of a soldier's couch."

They left the battlements without further words and descended to Malcolm's chamber.

In the morning early Alaster departed, for he had no excuse to prolong his stay, and Malcolm MacPhie drew a long breath of satisfaction when he saw the stalwart form of the young Highlander disappear up the glen.

That night when the moon veiled her silvery face behind the towering head of old Ben Nevis, Annie of Lochiel wandered pensively upon the battlements of Inverlochy, gazing ever and anon upon the craggy platform that jutted out from the mountain's side.

A tall form emerged from the shadows and advanced to the edge of the cliff.

"Alaster?" whispered the maid in cautious tones, bending over the parapet.

"I am not a goat," answered Alaster with a gleesome laugh, "but it is even I, Alaster, fair Annie."

"How brave you are!" cried the maid, involuntarily. "You have undergone this danger to see me once again?"

"You know right well what brings me here. Annie, I love you. Short as our acquaintance has been, you have enslaved my heart. I have scant time for wooing. My presence here may be discovered at any moment. If you bide in Inverlochy, it will be to become the wife of Malcolm MacPhie. Fly with me to the land of Kintyre, and share a chieftain's home."

"Alaster, I would willingly fly with thee to escape the dreaded fate that awaits me here; but how can I escape? Malcolm MacPhie has watched me closely all the day"—

"Aye, and he watches thee now," cried Malcolm, suddenly emerging upon the battlement. "Fickle jade! didst think to outwit me?"

Annie uttered a faint shriek of despair.

"Leap, Annie, leap," cried Alaster, in sharp, ringing tones. "The space is narrow—spring boldly from the parapet—thy lover's arms await thee!"

Scarcely conscious what she did—impelled by desperation and that instinctive feeling of obedience which true love prompts—Annie avoided the grasp of the exasperated Malcolm, ran a few steps upon the parapet and leaped boldly across the yawning void. Malcolm paused aghast; he expected to hear her death shriek and the dull sound of her form as it struck the rocks beneath. But he only heard a cry of joy, and saw Annie twining her arms around Alaster's neck, while his clasped her in safety to his breast.

To this day the curious traveler who visits the old gray ruins of Inverlochy is shown the spot from which Annie sprang, and that part of the battlement still bears the name of the "Maiden's Leap."

Alaster and Annie disappeared in the gloom, and Malcolm hastened to alarm the castle and urge a hot pursuit. But who could follow the bold Highlander as he leaped lightly from crag to crag, bearing his precious burden in his arms. Pursuit was unavailing; the fugitives could not be found, and Malcolm MacPhie returned sullenly to Inverlochy, swearing a deep and bloody vengeance.

There was high feasting in the land of Kintyre, and Castle Mingarry opened its hospitable gates, so that all of the Clan Donald might witness the nuptials of Annie of Lochiel and Alaster, their young chief.

A year had scarcely elapsed when Malcolm MacPhie urged the Campbells to undertake an expedition against the Clan Donald. Castle Mingarry was surprised and burned, but Alaster and his bride escaped and fled into Ireland. So ended the "Raid of Kintyre."

When Montrose raised the royal standard in Scotland for the service of Charles I, the Marquis of Antrim promised him assistance and looked about for a leader for his troops. Alaster presented himself and claimed the post.

"On what ground do you ask for the command?" demanded the marquis.

Alaster drew forth his claymore and replied, "This, this is the best hand to wield the claymore of any in Scotland."

"And which is the next best?" asked Dears MacAlister, a brave Highlander, who also wished the command.

"Faith, this!" replied Alaster, shifting the claymore from the right hand to the left. The others withdrew their claims, and the command was given to Alaster.

And now the work of retribution was commenced. In the fierce strife that began, under the able generalship of James Grahame, marquis of Montrose, the first man slain was Malcolm MacPhie.

Alaster led the claymores which decided the day at Tippermuir, Perth and Aberdeen.

On Candlemas day, 1645, the royal army, commanded by Montrose and Alaster, descended the defiles and ranged themselves upon the banks of Lochiel to encounter the Campbells, who were drawn up under the walls of Inverlochy and commanded by Sir Donald Campbell of Auchinbreck.

In the first charge, Alaster, with one sweep of his claymore, cut off Sir Donald's head, and carried consternation into the ranks of the foe. The Campbell's were utterly defeated, Inverlochy taken and the "Raid of Kintyre" avenged.—George L. Aiken in True Flag.

Remember This When You Call on a Zulu.

A Zulu chief, when you enter his hovel, remains silent for some moments, and seems quite unconscious of your presence. At length he says in a tone of grave dignity, "Ge saku bona" (I see you), to which you reply in the same way. The longer he takes to "see you," the greater man you are supposed to be; and until you are thus "seen" you must keep silent, and appear as much as possible not to be there at all!—David Ker in New York Epoch.

The Screech Owl.

Few cries of birds are more melancholy than that of the screech owl, a sound which has long been regarded with dislike. The superstitious dread of the cry of the owl is found in the forest lands of the far west. The redskin listens with alarm to the dismal screeching of the owl, firmly believing that its wild cries portend some impending calamity. Wilson, the ornithologist, in describing the cry of these owls, says: "This ghostly watchman has frequently warned me of the approach of morning, sweeping down and around my fires, uttering a loud and sudden 'Waugh O! waugh O!' sufficient to have alarmed a whole garrison. He has other nocturnal solos, one of which very strikingly resembles the half suppressed scream of a person suffocating or throttled." Sir John Richardson narrates the circumstance of a party of Scottish Highlanders who passed a long winter's night of intense fear in the depths of an American pine forest. They had made their bivouac fire from wood taken from an Indian tomb; all night long the shrieks of the owl rang in their affrighted ears, cries which they at once judged came from the spirit of the old warrior bemoaning his desecrated resting place.

THE NAME "CRANK."

One Version of How This Much Abused Term Originated.

It is claimed by one authority that the first "crank" was Morse, the inventor of the telegraph. According to the popular story, when Morse made his first appearance in Washington and when congress met he was on hand to try and secure an appropriation of $17,000 to build an experimental telegraph line from Washington to Baltimore. He brought along with him his wires, instruments and electrical generator. The former he stretched in and around the Capitol building, with instruments here and there, and the generator which was operated with a crank, he placed in a convenient location and secured the services of a man to do the generating.

The experiment created intense interest among the members of congress, and especially among the northern members of the senate. They became so absorbed in Mr Morse and his experiment, and they neglected their business in the senate to such an extent, that that body was frequently without a quorum. The center of their interest was the crank machine turned by the man in his operation of generating the electric current for the wires. The interest but increased as Mr. Morse each day more clearly demonstrated the practicability of his invention, and the public's business in the senate suffered accordingly.

Finally, Senator Benton's patience became exhausted at the want of a quorum and, rising in the senate one morning, he said:

"Mr. President, it is quite evident to my mind that we will never be able to proceed with business till this crank man and his bill is disposed of, and, with the object of hastening him to fold up his crank and get away from the Capitol so we may have the attention of the senators, I move that the bill appropriating $17,000 to construct a line between this city and Baltimore be put upon its passage."

As soon as word went out that the bill had been called up, the northern senators flocked into the chamber, and in a few minutes Mr Morse was made happy over the passage of his bill. But from that time on he was known as "Morse, the Crank."

A Model of Italian Matrons.

Vittoria Colonna, the Italian poetess of the Fifteenth century and a model of Italian matrons, as she was styled, was born in 1490, the daughter of Fabrizio Colonna, great constable of the kingdom of Naples, and of Anna, the daughter of Federico di Montefeltro, duke of Urbino. Vittoria belonged to one of the oldest and most illustrious families of Italy, who, in the Eleventh century, became possessed of the feudal estate of La Colonna in the Tusculan hills, and made themselves famous as soldiers and priests. At the age of seventeen Vittoria married Francis Davalos, son of the marquis of Pescara, who served with distinction in the armies of Charles V, and in 1525 died of the wounds he had received in the battle of Pavia, where, as commander of the imperial army, he greatly contributed to the glorious victory over the French. Vittoria Colonna, who was inconsolable for the death of her husband, determined on spending the remainder of her life in religious seclusion, although various proposals of a second marriage were made to her. Her contemporaries, among them Michael Angelo and Ariosto, extolled her beauty, her talents and her virtue, and her poems, entitled "Rime della divina Vittoria Colonna di Pescara," were greatly admired, and have often been reprinted. Vittoria Colonna died at Rome in 1547, and her poems upon religious subjects, "Rime Spirituale di Vittoria Colonna," were published at Venice in 1548.

Killing an Artist's Pet.

A little story is told of Du Maurier, the well known artist of Punch, the Englishman's materialized idea of wit, humor and burlesque. The artist lives in a beautiful country home near London, and one of his pet views is from his study window across his own lawn out beyond to the landscape surrounding Harrow. An American, of America to the west, recently visited him for a day, and Mr. Du Maurier was showing his guest about the place.

"There," he said, coming to his favorite window, "is the prettiest thing of all. That is Harrow."

The American looked out for a minute or two.

"Harrow?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes," repeated the artist, "Harrow."

"Is that so?" questioned the visitor. "Well, now, do you know, I took it for a lawn mower."

And he wasn't joking, either. He had overlooked the landscape entirely, and was looking at an agricultural machine on the lawn, and the artist's heart was broken.—Detroit Free Press.

Queer Superstitions.

If you pay out money on Monday morning you will pay out money all the rest of the week. It is unlucky to spill salt at the table, and to rub a hunchback will bring luck to any immediate project you have in view. To leave the house and then suddenly return to it is considered a bad omen. This is a very old superstition, but a common one with us. Laodamia refers to it in her letter to Protesilaus, after he had left for the Trojan war.

Some years ago I asked a neighbor to haul a dead horse from the premises. He declared that if he did so one of his own horses would die within the year. I reasoned him out of the superstition and he removed the horse. Strange to say, one of the span of horses which he used for the purpose died shortly afterward.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Ammonia Poisoning.

No poison brings death with more maddening agony than ammonia, but that fact does not seem to discourage the suicide. The man Harrowitz, who deliberately swallowed a fatal dose of the drug in New York, is only one of the many who have gone the ammonia route to death in spite of the excruciating pain. Dr. Blyth has recorded thirty cases of ammonia poisoning in the small London district of which he is health officer. Professor Mitchell mentions twenty-two cases, and four have occurred during the short time Dr. Jenkins has been connected with the coroner's office in New York.—Exchange.

A Story of Payn, the Novelist.

James Payn, the English novelist, is the author of this short but interesting story: "When I was a small boy I was taken to call upon a most excellent clergyman, who had a missionary box upon his drawing room table. I was too small to be interested in the conversation, and so after looking at the pictures and out of the window, I amused myself with trying whether a five shilling piece—all the money I had in the world, invested in that gigantic coin for safety—would go into the slit in the box. It was a close fit, but unfortunately it did go and slipped out of my fingers. There was a terrible metallic crash—a rock of silver falling into a sea of copper—and then, as the novelists say, 'I knew no more.' When I came to myself I found my family and the clergyman in raptures over my charitable act. I have given considerable money to the missionary cause since then, but never a sum with such ill grace or one that bankrupted me more completely."

Marriage Customs in Brittany.

In Brittany, if the wife seeks to rule, she must take care that the ring, when placed on her finger, shall slip at once to its place instead of allowing it to stop at the first joint. The bride who lost her ring lost her appetite, and to break it portended death. Attention is also paid in this province to the altar candles. If they burn brightly throughout the mass the couple will live harmoniously. The one whose candle burns with the brightest flame will live longest. If one goes out, then its donor will die that year.

The Swedish bride tries to see the groom before he sees her, to gain the mastery. She places her foot before his during the ceremony and sits in the bridal chair first. She must stand near the groom, so that no one can come between them.